

April 1957

National Security Medal

1. The National Security Medal, established by President Truman on January 19, 1953, by Executive Order No. 10431, may be awarded, under the terms of that Order, to "any person, without regard to nationality, including members of the armed forces of the United States, for distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution on or after July 26, 1947, in the field of intelligence relating to the national security." According to further regulations issued by the President, also on January 19, 1953, such a contribution "may consist of either exceptionally meritorious service performed in a position of high responsibility or of an act of valor requiring personal courage of a high degree and complete disregard of personal safety."

2. This decoration "shall be awarded by the President of the United States or, under regulations approved by him, by such person or persons as he may designate," so the Executive Order outlined. One of the awarding officials so designated is the Director of Central Intelligence. The accompanying Regulations (of January 19, 1953) explain further, that:

"Recommendations may be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council by any individual having personal knowledge of the facts of the exceptionally meritorious conduct or act of valor of the candidate in the performance of outstanding services, either as an eyewitness or from the testimony of others who have personal knowledge or were eyewitnesses. Any recommendations shall be accompanied by

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complete documentation, including where necessary, certificates, affidavits or sworn transcripts of testimony. Each recommendation for an award shall show the exact status, at the time of the rendition of the service on which the recommendation is based, with respect to citizenship, employment, and all other material factors, of the person who is being recommended for the National Security Medal. . . . Each recommendation shall contain a draft of an appropriate citation to accompany the award of the National Security Medal."

3. The design of the National Security Medal, approved by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, is described as follows by U. S. Army Regulations No. 672-5-1, July 20, 1956:

"A blue enameled compass rose surrounded by a red enameled oval, the interior dimensions of which are 1 inch vertically and 7/8 inch horizontally, bearing the inscription "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" at the top and "NATIONAL SECURITY" at the bottom, the whole enclosed within a laurel wreath of gold-finished bronze surmounted by an American bald eagle standing with wings raised. On the reverse a serial number appears on the eagle and the words "PRESENTED TO" are impressed on the compass rose. The name of the recipient is engraved below. The medal is suspended by a loop from a silk moire ribbon 2 inches in length and 1 3/8 inches in width, composed of a band of dark blue (1/4-inch), gold (3/32-inch), dark blue (11/16-inch), gold (3/32-inch), dark blue (1/4-inch). Diagonal gold lines (3/32 inch in width and 3/32 inch apart) extend downward from the wearer's right to left across the center band of dark blue. The miniature of this medal is furnished at the time of the award."

4. The elements of this design have been selected to represent the Nation's strength and the nature of intelligence activities. Thus, the National Bird, the American Eagle, is intended to depict strength and alertness; it is traditionally used in United States medal and coin designs. The compass rose is a design feature to be found also, for example, in the CIA seal and represents the collection

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of intelligence data from all areas to a central point. The laurel wreath has been used since ancient Roman times as symbolic of reward, either for valorous acts or for outstanding achievement. Blue as the color for the central elements of the design is heraldically considered an honor color standing for truth and justice, while red is used to indicate valor and patriotism. Blue is repeated in the ribbon design in order to correspond with the principal coloring of the medal, while the diagonal stripes appear because that style is unique in United States awards. Gold stripes represent gold, the senior heraldic metal. The medal is struck from a gold bronze alloy. It is manufactured by the U. S. Bureau of the Mint.

5. Since January 1953, among those to receive the National Security Medal are:

- a. General Walter Bedell Smith, former Director of Central Intelligence, January 1953
- b. Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director Federal Bureau of Investigation, May 1955
- c. Mr. William F. Friedman, cryptanalyst, National Security Agency, October 1955
- d. Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, former Director, Office of Strategic Services, April 1957

6. In presenting the decoration to J. Edgar Hoover on May 27, 1955, President Eisenhower said, in part:

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"Perhaps it is just best for me to say I am proud to be an agent for our people in conferring upon you this highest award that the Government has, and to say that your real reward--as all of us here know--is in the hearts, the thanks, and the gratitude of our entire nation."

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